

1 one occasion.

2 A Yeah, it looks right. It looks right.

3 Q Does this purport to be the door that you  
4 entered?

5 A Uh-huh.

6 Q And once you entered you yelled hello?

7 A Uh-huh.

8 Q Did you yell it more than once?

9 A I don't know, I may have.

10 Q Judge, I've got to get you to speak up.

11 A I don't know, I may have.

12 Q Did you get a response?

13 A No.

14 Q What did you do then?

15 A Walked in his office there, you know, his  
16 door, looked around in his office, then I went into  
17 what's labeled judge's chambers, looked around in  
18 there. I didn't see any -- any indication that he was  
19 there.

20 Q Tell us what you mean by walked in and  
21 looked around?

22 A I walked in --

23 Q Did you walk around the table?

24 A Well, no, I stayed on this side of the  
25 table and kind of looked around. I looked over -- his

1 computer was over there behind the desk.

2 Q In this area?

3 A Yeah, it was -- it's a lap-top and it was  
4 closed. And I didn't see any indication that -- I was  
5 looking for books open or a Coke's sitting around or --  
6 no indicator.

7 Q Did you yell again?

8 A No.

9 Q Did you go into any other areas?

10 A Huh-uh.

11 Q I'm getting a little out of sequence, but  
12 may I ask you, there's a picture that you were looking  
13 at?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q Is that picture located here or where is  
16 it?

17 A I think it's on that wall right there, if  
18 I remember.

19 Q Do you remember hearing the front doors  
20 open?

21 A No.

22 Q Do you remember hearing someone yell,  
23 "Hello"?

24 A Yeah. I heard a noise before that,  
25 though.

1 Q A noise like?

2 A I don't know. Some kind of a --  
3 something caught my attention. And I said, "Greg?"

4 Q When something caught your attention,  
5 were you standing here looking at the picture?

6 A Yes, I was, uh-huh.

7 Q And when you yelled "Greg," what, if any,  
8 response came?

9 A Within -- within a second or two or maybe  
10 less, I don't know, I heard somebody holler out, "Who's  
11 there?" or "Who is it?" or something like that to that  
12 effect.

13 Q And you did what?

14 A I walked into right there.

15 Q You were here planning on exiting here?

16 A Uh-huh.

17 Q Okay. Did you ever have occasion to open  
18 that door or touch that door again?

19 A No, I don't think so.

20 Q Judge, based on your recollection, is it  
21 fair to say that in walking from here to here if  
22 Bailiff Gay were standing in this vicinity she would  
23 have seen you come around that corner?

24 A She may have or she may not have. When  
25 I -- as I came to that door, of course, it was dark in

1 this area over here.

2 Q And over here, where are we talking  
3 about?

4 A In that reception office it was dark.

5 Q Okay.

6 A As I came there, she was standing to this  
7 side towards that what's --

8 Q Judge, it's important, and I apologize --

9 A Over here.

10 Q Move if you'd like.

11 MR. FERNANDEZ: No problem.

12 A Towards in here somewhere. And as I came  
13 ahead, when I first recognized -- saw her and  
14 recognized there was a person in there, my recollection  
15 was she was looking in here. Then she saw me, and then  
16 she said, "Oh, Judge Bonanno."

17 Q You've read her statements?

18 A I've read the one statement that Judge  
19 Holder gave.

20 Q Okay. Do you recall her testimony, I say  
21 testimony, her statement that she saw a, I think she  
22 referred to it as a shadow?

23 A I never saw that. I read in the  
24 newspaper that she said she saw a shadow, but I never  
25 read any statement of hers.

1 Q Moving in the opposite direction?

2 A I never heard that.

3 Q You've heard it now.

4 A I've heard it now.

5 Q How would you explain that?

6 A I can't.

7 Q Her suggestion is is that the individual  
8 that emerged, you, was coming from this area. Do you  
9 have a reaction to that?

10 A Not true.

11 Q She indicates that she yelled for you on  
12 more than one occasion.

13 A No, just one time.

14 Q We know that you, based on what you've  
15 said, felt that Judge Holder was somewhat of a leak.  
16 That's a bad term.

17 A Yeah, I don't want to use -- I don't want  
18 to say leak.

19 Q Okay, sir.

20 A He -- I think he feels like he's got a  
21 good relationship with the media. And he, you know, he  
22 talks to them, I think, and, you know.

23 Q Do you feel that Gaspar Ficarrotta is one  
24 of your better friends on the bench?

25 A Yeah, he's one of my better friends on

1 the bench I would say.

2 Q You were aware at this point in time of  
3 the difficulties he was experiencing?

4 A Vaguely.

5 Q Was this before any of it had broken?

6 A Yeah.

7 Q So your knowledge of it would have been  
8 based on your conversations with him?

9 A No. I really -- he and I never really  
10 talked about that. I figured if he wanted me to know  
11 about it he'd tell me.

12 Q Were you aware at that point in time of  
13 Tara Pisano having prepared a document at her  
14 attorney's request?

15 A You know, I don't -- you know, it's hard  
16 to separate because so much has happened since this  
17 time, so much talk. At that time I don't think that I  
18 really knew if there was anything like that.

19 I can tell you what I did know. I had  
20 heard, and I'm not sure where I'd heard it, but that  
21 there had been a -- there had been a letter that had  
22 been generated by an attorney for her, and that -- that  
23 the matter had been discussed and that it had been  
24 resolved. And that was basically what I had heard  
25 about it. But that if she had any kind of other

1 materials I hadn't -- I don't think at that time I'd  
2 ever heard that.

3 Q Were you aware that Tara Pisano and  
4 Bailiff Gay were good friends?

5 A You know, at that time on July 27th I  
6 don't think I could have told you Bailiff Gay's name.  
7 And I -- and I don't think if you'd have asked me I  
8 could have told you for sure that she -- that she was  
9 Judge Holder's bailiff. I didn't know. I really  
10 didn't pay that much attention.

11 I don't think I'd said two words to that  
12 lady prior to this incident. And whether they were  
13 good friends or not I really didn't know.

14 Q Had you ever used a key to enter Judge  
15 Holder's office?

16 A Prior to that time?

17 Q Well, you didn't use one at that time,  
18 did you?

19 A No.

20 Q So, had you ever used a key to -- have  
21 you ever used a key to enter his office?

22 A Well, you know, I don't -- there's two  
23 incidents that -- not two incidents, two situations  
24 that I may have. There was a time several months ago  
25 when I -- Judge Holder had given me a cigar for my

1 son-in-law who'd graduated from law school. He likes  
2 cigars. And Judge Holder had given me this cigar in  
3 a -- in a wooden cigar humidor.

4 But he told me to be sure to bring back  
5 this humidor because it was -- it was a special thing  
6 and he wanted to give it to him. He had met my  
7 son-in-law at one of the conferences.

8 So I took him back the humidor. And, you  
9 know, since I had the interview with the FDLE and all I  
10 was trying to remember that incident. And it seems to  
11 me that I may have taken that back to him and it may  
12 have been when he wasn't there. But then again it --  
13 maybe it wasn't. I can't be for sure.

14 And then I teach a class called  
15 Litigation Procedure at Hillsborough Community College.  
16 And in the second half of that course I have a thing  
17 that we do called the courthouse tour. And the class  
18 comes down here, when we're going to have class at  
19 between 7:00 and 9:45, and I take them around and we  
20 tour the courthouse. And we go into the courtrooms and  
21 Clerk's offices and Grand Jury room. I bring them in  
22 here so they can see it. And we go into various  
23 judges' offices. Like, I tried to show them one or two  
24 typical General Civil Division offices and conference  
25 rooms and the juvenile. I take them around. So I may



1 have gone in on one of those occasions, but with a key.  
2 But I can't be specific that yes, I did.

3 Q Judge, we can go on and on and ask the  
4 abstract and I don't want to do that. Is there  
5 anything that, hopefully briefly, you want to tell the  
6 Grand Jury about your presence in Judge Holder's office  
7 that day that we haven't already covered, either how  
8 you got in there, what you were doing in there, why  
9 you, whatever, anything else you want to add?

10 A The only thing I can add is what I've  
11 already -- have they heard my taped statement?

12 Q (Shakes head negatively.)

13 A They haven't heard that?

14 Q No, sir.

15 A Well, I gave a statement to the FDLE and  
16 the Sheriff's Office on the Thursday following when  
17 this thing happened. And we -- I went there to try to  
18 talk to this man, and it was a simple, innocent act on  
19 my part.

20 Unfortunately, I learned later that --  
21 that he had some -- he thought of me different than I  
22 thought of him. And he reacted in a very -- a way that  
23 I never anticipated.

24 I had hoped that we could resolve it if  
25 we could -- any problems that he had at this meeting we

1 had with Judge Alvarez the Monday following this  
2 incident, the Thursday. We came in that Monday, and he  
3 didn't want to talk about it.

4 That meeting -- that meeting may have  
5 broken down partially on my fault because I was -- I  
6 was upset that he would think that I was doing anything  
7 wrong in his office and not there for some -- just to  
8 talk to him, and I expressed that to him and the  
9 meeting broke down.

10 But, it's an unfortunate thing and it  
11 just -- it's just snowballed. And I -- I had no  
12 compunction to go to his office. If I needed to go in  
13 there for any reason I had -- I would've had no concern  
14 of doing it at this time because that's the way I  
15 thought our relationship was.

16 And I didn't -- and since, what I've  
17 learned afterwards, too, is that this bailiff is very  
18 close to Judge Holder. They are like family. He  
19 characterized it they're like family, which is fine. I  
20 have no problem with that, and I understand the  
21 loyalty.

22 But then I also got blindsided because I  
23 didn't realize that, with her having this closeness  
24 with him and with him having this animosity towards me  
25 that I didn't know about, that when she would see me in

1 the office, she would walk in and I would be in there,  
2 it would be like, uh-ho, the enemy is in the office.

3 So now her observations are going to be  
4 colored by this bias that she had, and that she would  
5 make everything in her mind to look suspicious.

6 So once I understood that later on after  
7 the storm had arisen, I understood why -- why her  
8 observations were -- were the way they were. They're  
9 inaccurate, I can tell you that right now. I was not  
10 nervous. I was not trying to hide. I was not trying  
11 to do anything in there.

12 But knowing her position now and her  
13 mind-set at the time, I can understand why she would --  
14 she would say that. And I don't fault her for it  
15 because she had the -- she had the loyalty to him, and  
16 she felt like -- and maybe in a way, considering his  
17 mind-set and then what she told him, I guess we can  
18 understand why he got so upset. But it's all a  
19 misunderstanding.

20 Q Judge, I'm going to tell you now what I  
21 think is on the mind of some Grand Jurors.

22 A Okay.

23 Q And what as human beings could affect  
24 everything you're saying. They've been up to that  
25 office. They've seen that door. They know about the

1 closures and how heavy the door is. And they'll speak  
2 for themselves, but my guess is there's not one in here  
3 that believes you could knock on that door and it swing  
4 open.

5 A No, no, it didn't do that. That's not  
6 what I said.

7 Q That is what you said, Judge.

8 A No.

9 Q Do you want me to read it to you again,  
10 Judge?

11 A You can read it a hundred times.

12 Q Well, is that what you said or not?

13 A It's not what I intended. I didn't say  
14 that I knocked on it and the door opened by itself. I  
15 grabbed the handle, and as I went in I knocked at the  
16 same time. I didn't knock on the door and it opened  
17 in.

18 If that's what it says, I didn't intend  
19 that. That was not what happened. And I've never said  
20 that's what happened intentionally. If you say I said  
21 it then, you know, maybe I did say it. Read what it  
22 says.

23 Q Judge, you read what it says.

24 A All right. I'll read it. Let me see.

25 Q It's page 14 of the interview with you.

1 And I'd like for you to start right where my thumb is  
2 and it says "Catlin."

3 A I lost the Catlin. Just -- okay. "And  
4 did you knock before you went in?"

5 "I -- I -- as I -- as I went to the door  
6 I knocked to push it. I started -- it started opening  
7 as I was -- as I was knocking. So I knocked it and I  
8 went in -- it went in at the same time." Okay?

9 Q "It started opening as I knocked it."

10 A But I had my hand on the -- on the -- on  
11 the knob at the time.

12 Q Then you pushed it open is what you're  
13 saying?

14 A Yeah.

15 Q Well, that's not what you said, Judge.

16 A Well, "I knocked to push it," I said. I  
17 don't know what -- you know, but what I meant to say  
18 was, and apparently I didn't -- I didn't say it very  
19 eloquently, was that I grabbed the handle and I started  
20 to go in as I knocked on the door. I was going in and  
21 knocking at the same time.

22 That's what I -- and I -- if I didn't say  
23 it, and apparently I didn't, but that's what happened.  
24 And I'm sorry if I confused you all by the way I worded  
25 it.

1 Q Do you believe that we should have a  
2 Chief Judge that serves more than one or two terms?

3 (Conference between Mr. Fernandez and the  
4 witness.)

5 MR. HILL: Let the record reflect that  
6 counsel is advising him on this response.

7 A I think it's -- under the Rules of  
8 Judicial Administration I don't think there's any --  
9 there's any set term limits, and I think it's up to the  
10 individual circuits. So I would say whatever the  
11 circuit wants, the judges in the circuit want is what  
12 it should be. How would I vote? You want to know how  
13 I'd vote?

14 Q Yes, sir.

15 A I'd vote to no term limits.

16 Q Well, that's essentially what's been done  
17 in Hillsborough County; is that right?

18 A What?

19 Q No term limits?

20 A Yeah. It's been brought up before and  
21 it's been defeated, that issue, by the judges.

22 Q Did you have the Barbas file with you on  
23 July 27th when you made your rounds?

24 A No.

25 Q And that wasn't really to be the purpose

1 of your visit, that that was just a segue into  
2 courthouse morale?

3 A It was a segue. It was a segue. But I  
4 needed to talk to him about it because there was a  
5 Motion for Rehearing that had been filed and I needed  
6 to see how we were going to handle that because --

7 Q Did you talk with him after July 27th  
8 about it?

9 A No, I haven't talked with him after July  
10 27th. As a matter of fact, after that case became so  
11 in the media, we went ahead and sent it out of county  
12 as a -- as a precaution. Can I -- can I talk a minute  
13 about that -- about that case just a second?

14 Q If you -- if you think it's relevant.

15 A I think it's relevant.

16 Q Can you keep it to two minutes or less?

17 A Yeah.

18 Q Okay, sir.

19 A Put the clock on me.

20 Q Got you.

21 A Got it? All right.

22 Q Go.

23 A This case was one that was -- it was gone  
24 through all the family law judges, and everybody  
25 decided they couldn't hear it except Judge Holder. He